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The inaugural address to the National Seminar of the Indian Adult Education Association, held at Pondicherry, India, December 26, 1968, examines the implications of the mass man, the challenge of violence to democratic living, and the role of education in parliamentary democracy. There is no simple, automatic correlation between education and freedom, adult education and parliamentary democracy. Adult education for living democratically involves the family, school, work and leisure time institutions, and society generally, and includes the participation of the citizen as a voter, member of a party, and officeholder. A study of the influence of adult education on Swedish elected officials revealed that 66% of the parliamentarians, 79% of the social democrats, 87% of the agrarians, 41% of the liberals, and 33% of the conservatives had recourse to adult education. Adult education preparation for city council members in Stockholm and three other selected communities ranged from 51% to 80%. Political participation must be learned; therefore, education bears a major responsibility for overcoming political apathy. [Not available in hardcopy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (nl)

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

ADULT EDUCATION FOR PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

by

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Inaugural Address to the
National Seminar
of the
Indian Adult Education Association

Pondicherry, 26 December 1968

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NO EDUCATION NO DEMOCRACY

At first blush the relationship between adult education and parliamentary democracy seems a simple, direct, unilinear one. No adult education, no parliamentary democracy. The Paris daily, Le Monde, in its issue of 22 November carried a startling headline: seventeen military takeovers in Africa in six years,(1) and most journals followed with a sombre recital of the events. Look around you here in Asia, where since their independence over half the governments have been overthrown by their military leaders. Latin America is experiencing a similar spate of replacement of democratic structures by military rule. The Third World, with over 96 per cent of the world's illiterates living in it, seems to be bearing out the view - No Education, No Democracy.

COMPLETE EDUCATION NO DEMOCRACY

On further reflection, however, this simple, direct relationship, no education, no parliamentary democracy, does not seem to exist. Turning now to Europe of the inter-war period, another relationship, complete education, no parliamentary democracy seems to have equal validity. Europe had had universal education for decades: illiteracy was almost non-existent. Mass media and books had been developed in all their plenitude for the literate masses. Education was general and complete. And yet led by Fascist and Nazi societies, democracy was on the retreat in the continent. In country after country, the individual man of the semi-literate Nineteenth century was being turned into the mass man of the literate Twentieth century. This mass man was ready and willing to surrender his sacred rights and inherent responsibilities and become party to a most flagrant display of primitive passion and savage brutality through service to a State which was completely contemptuous of democracy.

THE MASS MAN

At the first World Conference on Adult Education called by Unesco at Elsinore, Denmark in 1949, Jean Guéhenno recalled(2) in vivid terms this odious and bloody page of our educational history and sounded a solemn warning:

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(1) Dix-sept coups d'état militaires en Afrique noire en six ans. Le Monde. 22 November 1968. Paris.
"Young Turks" are taking over: coup virus spreads. International Herald Tribune. 2 December 1968. Paris.

(2) J. Guéhenno: Adult Education and the Crisis of Civilization. Adult Education: Current Trends and Practices. Unesco. Paris 1949.

I shall say nothing here, lest I cast gloom over the discussions of all we have been forced to learn of man and men in the last ten years. I shall not speak of that world which another of our writers has called the "concentration world" and which stretches far beyond the boundaries of the concentration camps, for it perhaps involves us all: we bear a great blemish. We now know that Sade was right and that man is that, too, "that" of which we dare not speak. Man has perhaps never undergone so deep a change as in becoming a mass man into which he is turning. What has since become of the individual man? What an advance here, too! We march together, we shout together, we go to the factory together, to prison together, to the concentration camp and death - always together, we think together or we believe we do. In fact we can never think together. But we do everything else together. The sole desire of every man is to be saved or lost with the multitude, to think by proxy and the common grave may soon become, by law, the fittest charnel house for the depersonalized masses.

HAMLET'S GHOST

Thirty years before Guéhenno, after the war to end wars, Paul Valéry painted an equally sombre picture(3) of the seeming antinomy between the life of the mind and the life of the spirit, between education and democracy:

Now on a vast battlement of Elsinore, stretching from Basle to Cologne, and reaching out to the sands of Nieuport, the marshes of the Somme, the chalk-lands of Champagne and the granite hills of Alsace, the European Hamlet faces millions of ghosts.

He is a Hamlet of the mind. He is meditating on the life and death of truths. His ghosts are the subjects of all our disagreements; his remorse is for all on which we pride ourselves: he is weighed down by the burden of knowledge and discovery, powerless to embark anew on those boundless endeavours. He reflects on the weariness of beginning the past over again and the folly of constantly seeking something new. He wavers between two pitfalls, for two dangers continually threaten his world: order and disorder.

When he picks up a skull it is a famous one. Whose was it? This was Leonardo. He invented the flying man but the flying man has not done quite what the inventor intended: we know that today the flying man astride his mighty swan has other things to do than to fetch snow from the mountain tops to scatter it, on hot days, in the streets of the cities. This other skull is that of Leibnitz, who dreamed of universal peace.

Hamlet is not sure what to do with all these skulls. Suppose he left them behind! will he cease to be himself? His terribly penetrating mind considers the path from war to peace. That way is far darker and more dangerous than the way from peace to war. And I, he asks, I, the intellect of Europe, what will become of me? And what is peace? Peace is perhaps that state in which

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(3) P. Valéry: Variété. Gallimard. Paris 1924.

the natural enmity of men takes shape in creation instead of being turned to destruction as in war. But am I not weary of producing? Must I follow the rest of the world and copy Polonius, who is now the editor of a big newspaper? Or Laertes, who is something in the air force?

Farewell, ye ghosts! The world needs you no more. Nor me. The world which gives the name of progress to its fatal desire for certainties, is trying to combine the advantages of death with the good of life. There is still some confusion, but yet a little while and all will be explained: we shall at last see the miracle of an animal society, the perfect ant heap for ever more.

May I recall, however, that ants do not maim, mutilate, murder each other, nor devour themselves.

OUR KURUKSHETRA

How apposite these words are to the record of the short history of independence of this our beloved land and its increasing volatile peoples. This land where every step is haunted by the ghosts of its great men and wise, whose every square inch is marked by glorious events recorded in the Gita, the Acokan edicts and the Kural and Tholkappiam! Its peoples which were suckled, since the dawn of the century, on the milk of non-violence, led by that apostle of satya and ahimsa, whose centenary of birth we and the whole Unesco world are celebrating this year!(4) And yet we ushered in our day of liberation with a mass violence, mass slaughter and mass displacement of some ten million men and women, young and old, babies and children, an opening which almost destroyed the delicate democratic fabric of our nascent free society. How many of us can recall that other great leader of ours, Jawaharlal Nehru, who had only two nights ago called us to join him in our rendezvous with destiny, standing back unbelieving, aghast and confused at this national orgy, this dance of death, and shaking off his weariness rushing to the side of his friend and fellow worker at Jamia Millia, ready to lay down his own life in attempting to bring us back to sanity and some semblance of democracy.(5)

But this scene is, alas, not just of the past, a very near, mere 22 year past! Every day, today we see how near the surface violence is in our land in its challenge to democratic living. Whether it be in the burning of trams and buses, the looting of shops and houses and the rioting and killing of minority communities we, who with our sub-subdivisions of Brahmins and non-Brahmins, Muslims and Christians are a nation of minorities, we are gradually moving into a society where disagreement is not settled by debate and a counting of heads but by declamation and a cracking of skulls. Or again, whether it be in the acts of corruption, nepotism and power-seeking that we indulge in or condone, in the reckless hurling of charges and counter-charges in and outside our legislative assemblies, in what has come to be called floor crossing in these bodies, parliamentary democracy is

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(4) Project 3.112 of the fourteenth session of the General Conference. Unesco. Paris 1966.
Resolution 3.113 of the fifteenth session of the General Conference. Unesco. Paris 1968.

(5) Commemoration volume on Dr. Z. Husain. Jamia Nagar. New Delhi 1968.

daily being brought into disrepute and whittled away. And in the vanguard of this whole process is the intellectual elite; the torch bearers of this procession are the educated minority of the land, not the illiterate masses.

Of course speaking to you thus, I may sound as if I am preaching to the converted, as if I were carrying coals to Newcastle. I do not suppose that there is one member in this Seminar who has burnt a bus or crossed the floor. Such people are too busy to attend seminars and conference like this. But as Gandhiji taught us and Valéry reminds us, where one of us, educated, is guilty, all are guilty. Being members one of another, we carry a common responsibility.

LESSON OF HISTORY

Can we learn from this history - Ancient and Modern? Or are we once more going to demonstrate that the only lesson that we learn from history is that we never learn from history? I hope not. I pray not.

History shows us that the absence of education and military takeovers go together: it also demonstrates that the presence of education and odious and tyrannous dictatorship coexist. Our own brief history tells us that the education we received and the education that the majority of our fellow citizens have not received provide fertile ground for the erosion, if not death of democracy. In other words, there is no simple, automatic correlation between education and freedom, between adult education and parliamentary democracy.

ADULT EDUCATION FOR PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY DEFINED

Your theme for the Seminar, adult education for parliamentary democracy, harks back to the theme of the Conference - adult education; living to learn, learning to live, which I have elaborated in my Presidential Address. Education is not preparation for life but life itself. Adult education is not an educational stage of life: it is an educational style of life. Parliamentary democracy is basically the participation of every citizen in the functioning of society. Adult education for parliamentary democracy is thus an educational style of living, of living democratically. This style of living, this democratic living, involves the following institutions:

The family;

The school;

The work and leisure-time institutions;

Society generally.

This style of living involves the participation of the citizen:

As voter;

As member of party;

As officeholder.

This style of living involves the use of certain methods and techniques:

For dialogue and discussion;

For decision making.

Having dealt in some detail with the institutional and methodological implications of the concept and mandate of adult education in my Presidential Address, I will deal only with some additional issues here.

INSTITUTIONS

The family

How far is our family a democratic cell? Is family living democratic living? How can the dichotomy of parental authority and freedom of the individual child, respect for elders and initiative of the young be reconciled? How can the sanctity of the human person and the equality of all persons in dignity and rights be expressed in (a) the relative position of men and women, boys and girls in the family; (b) the decision as to the number and spacing of children in the family? Can we stop asking a family at childbirth whether it is a child or a girl which was born? Can the size of the family and the number of children and their prospects be discussed and agreed upon by both parents? How can both the elders and the youth in a family be involved in planning of the future size of future families?

One expression and base of democratic living is genuine communication between parent and children. Over 80 per cent of American adults, but less than 30 per cent of French adults, are able to report what their parents' political party preferences are.(6) I would guess that, given our family tradition of treating children as morons and of demanding that they be silent in the company of their elders, the Indian percentage would be very low. Is our familial tradition of passive obedience by the young vis-à-vis their elders responsible both for our being easily ruled and liking it, ("the slave mentality") and our outbursts into violence (when we cannot have our way)? A study of two pre-literate tribes in Africa shows that one, the Gusii, where children are thoroughly subordinate to adults, were compliant to British colonial rule, while the other, the Nuer, with

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(6) P. Econverse and G. Dupeux: Politicization of the Electorate in France and the United States. Public Opinion Quarterly. Vol.26. Princeton 1962.

its egalitarianism under which the children talked back freely, were in constant revolt.(7) Patterns of family relationship have an important impact on the acquisition of beliefs, loyalities and personality traits. Living democratically in the family is an excellent learning experience for living democratically in the wider society.

Undemocratic practices, however, are not all on the side of the elders and parents. The sixteenth century French philosopher Jean Bodin, seemed to be describing life today in 1968 when he said:(8)

> Children who stand in little awe of their parents and have even less fear of the wrath of God, readily set at defiance the authority of the magistrate.

Children can be tyrants and can easily perfect their techniques of tyranny in the permissive atmosphere of the family. A recent study in the United States showed that where children made the decisions on what television programmes to see, educational televiewing was minimal.(9) The family is the training ground for learning the know-how of democratic or tyrannous decisions.

The school

The school system must be a prototype of democracy. I have in my Presidential Address indicated how the school system based as it is on compulsion and conformity, instils anti-democratic attitudes. Its goal-oriented, antediluvian and autocratic teaching and learning methods must give place to rôle-oriented techniques of instruction and thought which can become the basis for dialogue and tolerance of disagreement. I have then set forth the implications of this change for the objectives, organization, content and methods of education. We will have taken a long step forward toward the achievement of democracy in this great land of ours when our institutions of education are themselves democratically organized and operative.

Work and leisure-time institutions

The mode of organization and method of functioning of the farm, factory and office, the trade union, the Chamber of Commerce, the agricultural workers co-operative, the community block, the club, the theatre and the cultural centre could either promote understanding and respect for parliamentary democracy or develop anti-democratic, anti-parliamentarian attitudes. A recent study of the structure of the labour force in Norway and the United States(10) indicates, despite their great differences, (25.9 per cent in primary and 19.8 per cent in tertiary industry in Norway and 12.5 per cent and 31.2 per cent in the United States), to what

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(7) R.A. Levine: The Internalization of Political Values in Stateless Societies. Human Organization. Vol.XIX. Lexington (Ky.) 1960.

(8) See F.I. Greenstein: Political Socialization. International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences. Vol.XIV. New York 1968.

(9) M. Goldstein: Reports of University of Oregon for U.S. Office of Education. Washington, D.C. 1961.

(10) S. Rotiken and A. Campbell: Citizen Participation in Norway and the United States of America. International Social Science Journal. Vol.XII, No.1. Unesco, Paris 1960.

extent full membership participation is or is not built into these institutions. Where the structure is oligarchic, the procedures pre-cooked and the areas of decisions vague and undefined, there is a real threat to democracy. Our institutions in India need to be reviewed from the double point of view of leadership variables (higher versus low ego strength) and participation procedures (life situation variables).

Society generally

The manner in which society is organized and the values by which its members live have profound influence on democratic living. The rigid stratified hierarchical order which the caste system and many religious institutions have come to represent, the curious strength of the joint family and the negation of our neighbour if he is not of our closed circle, the preponderant rôle which linguistic and geographic affinities have come to play, the apparent high values attached to renunciation and self-imposed poverty together with basic self-centredness, greed and desire for material wealth - all these need to be subject to full and frank investigation, study and research. Only then will we know what to conserve, what to throw out and how to replace what, for living democratically.

PARTICIPATION OF THE CITIZEN

How far and in what manner do these institutions permit the citizens in this land to participate in the governance of his country as: (a) a voter; (b) a member of a political party, and (c) as an elected official. Democracy is enhanced by political participation and is thwarted by political apathy.

The simplest test is voter participation. In the United Kingdom, 76-85 per cent of eligible voters voted in 1955, 80 per cent in France in 1958, 73 per cent in Finland in 1956, 78 per cent in Norway in 1960 and 60 per cent in the recent presidential elections in the United States. In the 1966 general elections in India, 61.43 per cent voted. Should one then say that the United States and India are only a 60 per cent democracy?

Turning to the second index, membership in political parties, in the United Kingdom 45-50 per cent of the electorate subscribe to a political party and 10-12 per cent claim to be keenly interested, in Finland 40 per cent, in Norway 15 per cent, in France around 4 per cent, in the United States 2-3 per cent and in India around the French/United States percentage. It is clear that these figures of party membership, are not comparable as their statistical base is variable and political participation in countries like France and the United States is expressed outside of party membership.

The third index of political participation, the percentage of candidates who offer themselves for elective office, is generally around 0.2-0.5 per cent of the electorate. There are wider variations in the proportion of elected local officials; rising from a low 13 per 10,000 electors in the United Kingdom, to 32 in

the United States, 49 in Finland and 72 in Norway.(11) In India the various estimates indicate a 5 per 10,000 ratio.

May I add the brief comment that the extent, reality and intensity of these various forms of citizen participation are both inclusive and parameter setting in regard to "direct democracy", (which is the use of revolutionary means to achieve reformist ends) expressed in boycotts, demonstrations, marches, sit-ins, teach-ins, fastings, Satyagraha, which my generation used as an instrument of national liberation and the current generation employs as a prelude to violence and violent manifestations. A fascinating point of historical speculation would be to try to guess when India would have become independent if it had followed the constitutionalism of Tej Bahadur Sapru instead of the non-violent, non-co-operationism of Mohandas Karamdas Gandhi. Equally the parameter to such revolutionary means were set by him when as a result of the Chandi Chowkh violence, Ganhiji called off the independence struggle.

There is a growing body of literature on the parliamentary profession,(12) to which we in India should contribute as one means of strengthening parliamentary democracy. We have left behind the days of Dadhabai Naroji, Ashutosh Mukherji, and even those of Rajaji and Panditji just as the U.S. senator is no longer the classic figure with the mane of white hair sweeping down over his collar, the dignified paunch, the frock coat with the stetson covering the mottled jowls. (In fact, last week I was introduced to a senator who looked more like a young university don than the stereotype countenance of the slightly apprehensive Roman emperor.) The parliamentarian of today is one who is endorsed by his party (which degenerates into bossism and produces the party hack), harassed by his constituents, (the Soviet Deputy's preoccupations in this regard, as recounted by Mr. Gubin, are exactly similar to those of every member of our Lokh Saba), well educated in all countries, though in India a university law degree is no longer a must. He has unequal political knowledge and a strong personality inclined to authoritarianism. His competence for political activity develops out of his life environment and his affect, his concern and indignation expressed in opposition and protest which are fed by all the voluntary bodies he is associated with. French sociologists(13) point out that French voters do not particularly want the man they return to parliament to resemble themselves and this is true of other lands, including ours and may in part account for the parachuting of candidates in certain constituencies. The parliamentarian comes from a fairly well to do background, because his profession is badly organized and poorly paid everywhere. There has been a decrease in the number of parliamentarians from the working classes, in Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States and France. Looking at parliamentarians the world over, the need for its professionalization, by developing common norms, specific abilities and expert knowledge together with long

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(11) These statistics are recorded in seven papers on citizenship participation in political life: International Social Science Journal. Vol.XII, No.1. Unesco, Paris 1960.

(12) J.C. Wahke and H. Eubau: Legislative Behaviour. A Reader in Theory and Research. Glencoe (Ill.) 1959.
The Parliamentary Profession: A compendium of nine papers. International Social Science Journal. Vol.XIII, No.4. Unesco, Paris 1961.

(13) L. Hamon: Members of French Parliament. Ibid I.S.S. Journal.

experience, is an urgent need. This may be one specific task of adult education for our own parliamentarians.

In a study(14) on the influence of adult education on Swedish elected officials, it was found that 66 per cent of the parliamentarians, 79 per cent of the social democrats, 87 per cent of the agrarians, 41 per cent of the liberals and 33 per cent of the conservatives had recourse to adult education. Adult education preparation for city council members in Stockholm and three other selected communities ranged from 51 to 80 per cent. Even in the cabinet, 7 of 15 ministers prepared for public service through adult education. The success of parliamentary democracy in Sweden is certainly assured by its adult education activities.

In our country, as in most newly independent countries, parliamentary democracy faces further strains. In these countries, the united national front as the sole political party which led the fight for liberation must in time evolve into two or three political parties with distinguishable programmes and alternatives. Revolutionary or underground opposition of pre-independence days must develop into "His Majesty's loyal opposition" after independence. The transitional phase which sees the growth of what one African leader called monocracy, what we in Asia know as splinter groups and guided democracy based on personalities and not principles, is a long and difficult one and can be both shortened and usefully employed by planned civic education. Such educational programmes must also develop the art of losing, including the healthy tradition in Europe and North America of publicly conceding defeat to the opponent. In parliamentary democracy, the demos speaks and our Faustian-Karman heritage, which lies somewhere between making a demon of success and a cult of failure, must help us accept its voice unconditionally and go on to the next act of the drama.

Citizen participation which is the basis for a functioning parliamentary democracy, and to which the indices referred to earlier are no more than a rough guide, has been the subject of careful study from the time of Lord Bryce.(15) He divided citizens into (a) a very small percentage who made opinion; (b) a slightly larger group who talked and discussed, read the news and attended meetings and (c) the vast majority who had no opinions, were "indifferent to public affairs, reading little and thinking less about them".

Studies by political scientists(16) of this last group distinguishes two types of politically apathetic citizens. First there are those who disdain participation in the political process because it seems to them corrupt, immoral and self-serving. (A plague on both your houses!) Second, there are those who fail to participate out of political indifference (what does it matter whether it is Rama who rules or Ravana), exclusion (women in the past and youth today) or

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(14) H. Erickson: Influence of Adult Education and Swedish Political Leadership. International Review of Education. Vol.XII, No.2. Hamburg 1966.

(15) Lord Bryce: The American Commonwealth. 1893.
Modern Democracies. 1921. Macmillan. New York.

(16) H. McCloskey: Political Participation. International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences. Vol.XII. New York 1968.

incapacity (the illiterate and inarticulate). This second group is the numerically preponderant one. Political participation must be learned and for such learning there must be capacity, motivation and opportunity. In this group all three pre-conditions are observed to be missing and it is the function of education to create or contribute to them.

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF PARTICIPATION

Education bears a major responsibility for overcoming political apathy. Where society and its institutions contribute to democratic living, studies show[17] that education offers high and reliable correlations with political participation, because: (a) education helps to develop a sense of civic duty; (b) the schools can serve as a setting in which the skills of political participation are acquired, such as joining organizations, participating in meetings, discussing broad social questions and organizing for the achievement of group goals; and (c) the more educated are able to transmit more effectively their political interest and knowledge to their children. Conversely, does illiteracy imply low civic participation?[18]

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(17) Ibid H. McCloskey.

(18) To try to understand, in order to try to choose and to determine what one wants, one must first be able to read. In times when men are more and more dependent on the intermediary of signs, to be unable to read means isolation in the world; and this is true despite the proliferation and propagation of images - and incidentally we do not realize sufficiently to what an extent those images refer to ideas which cannot be handled with precision without the written word. Isolation from the world, and therefore isolation in the world, solitude, darkness, impotence, without command of any means of finding a place in accordance with one's own ideas in the environment, of choosing one's own work, of defending one's rights, of ordering one's needs and, a fortiori, of influencing by deliberate choice the changes taking place in that environment.
René Maheu: Address to International Conference on Human Rights. DG/68/3. Teheran 1968.
What good is it to guarantee the free election of the representatives of the people and to declare that the will of the people should express itself "by universal and equal suffrage" in a world where the legislation of certain countries still maintains distinctions between the literate and the illiterate and where millions of people cannot exercise their right to vote with a full knowledge of the facts because they cannot read or write. This is true, for instance, of the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely-chosen representatives. The illiterates are in fact necessarily limited in their conception of the world and their understanding of public affairs. The road to reliable, well-documented information is irremediably barred. That shows the great limitations placed on the exercise of their civic duties. It is not surprising therefore that the first thing done by a government which wants its régime to be founded on a solid democratic basis is to ensure adult literacy.
Illiteracy and Human Rights. Unesco. Paris 1968.

The branch of education most directly concerned with training for parliamentary democracy is the area known as civics and civics training. This was a problem central to Plato's concern with the Republic and Manu with his Smriti. Since then, educational systems - peoples' colleges, cultural centres, evening classes, workers universities and all forms of mass education - have concerned themselves with unknown degrees of success with the preparation of citizenry at all stages and in every forum for participation in public affairs. In parliamentary democracy there is special need for education about parliament because the government leaders are well known and possess a charisma. I have a feeling that civics is a neglected area of our educational system, with no more than a fitful start made in our programmes for social education and national integration. When I was a student, every village bhajan and drama, every kalakshebam and college entertainment, ended with a secretive tableau of Mother India and the seditious rendering of Vande Matheram, Sen Tamilnadu and Janagana Mana. What is the similar spontaneous, the parallel political instruction of today?

The part played by the election campaign in the civic education of the citizen requires further cross national research. Rousseau, two centuries ago, made the caustic comment that the British people enjoyed political freedom only once in five years. Civic education, however, is not simply a function of the length and intensity of the election campaign. Election jamborees are useful but not necessary educational experiences. The reaction in the United States to the recent nominating conventions, the dangers of "over-exposure" and the problem of "peaking too soon" of the nominees, and the fact that the three presidential candidates wore themselves so ragged that they were hardly audible on the television screen as I listened to them two weeks before the end of the campaign, all raise questions as to the relative merits of the short, inexpensive, quiet electioneering of the parliamentary system (which also have other means of civic education) and the more elaborate election processes of the presidential system.

In this task of informing citizens as to political issues, attitudes and the imperative to vote, in the whole decision-making area, the educational process and adult education have not only the traditional techniques of the primary group, that is, the family, the school, the group of work associates and friends, which we had in my student days but since independence a whole new method and technique, the mass media, that is radio and television, films and filmstrips, exhibitions, newspapers, magazines, books and pamphlets in all our national languages. These media provide quick, universal, powerful, relatively inexpensive, precise and simple techniques of civic education.(19) The dreary controversy about the effects

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(19) Referring to the revolutionary effect of mass media under the title "The Medium is the Massage", an acknowledged authority in this field states that it shows up politics as giving yesterday's answers to today's questions and is instead producing a new form of politics in which the living room has become a voting booth. Studies indicate that television, which brought the horrors of the Viet-Nam war into every American drawing room every night for the last 18 months, contributed to important political decisions such as the emergence of Senator McCarthy as a presidential candidate, the decision of President Johnson not to run for a second term, the majority trend in public opinion polls against the war, et al. The Milton Eisenhower Commission on

(Footnote continued on next page)

of the absence of personal confrontation need no longer worry us. The Lazarsfeld hypothesis(20) links the two methods of communication through the group of opinion leaders or influentials, who are the persons who have more and continuing contact with mass media, who transmit and interpret information and ideas gained from the media to the others. Recent studies(21) of the application of this two-stage hypothesis show that the apparent dangers of mass media dividing society between those who think for themselves and those who are taught what to think, are non-existent. The evaluation, now in progress, of the reactions of the 1,000 persons in Tiruchi and Tanjore districts to the films on high yielding varieties of paddy should throw further light on this subject.

And where can one better behold the influential at work than here, the home of Sri Aurobindo, that youthful revolutionary who turned from terrorism to truth, from a political prisoner to a spiritual liberator, whose fiery torch of love, compassion, courage and conscious self-realization is being passed on from here in Pondicherry to all parts of his motherland and several parts of the Unesco land, which is also his fatherland.(22) And the successor influential today of this raging movement for self-education is the Mother, whose vision of the world-to-be is being embodied in Auroville, that home for the homeless, that life of beauty, truth and goodness for those who have known no beauty, truth and goodness, that democratic dream that is rising before our very eyes across this town.

AGENDA FOR ACTION

And so we see that we have the potential and we have the knowledge to build adult education in the service of parliamentary democracy. Our task is not an

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(19) (Footnote continued from previous page)
violence in its last report on 1 December, states that the rôle of the news media substantially influenced the behaviour of both demonstrators and law enforcers during confrontations at the Chicago convention last August. It speaks of a "police riot" as well as "Yippie provocations". "What 'the whole world was watching', after all was not a confrontation but the picture of a confrontation, to some extent directed by a generation that had grown up with television and learned to use it." Abbie Hoffmann, the Yippie leader, testified as to how he hoped to use television and the report summarizes his testimony: "This theatrical concept was a primary ingredient of their approach. The audience would be the American public, the means of communication would be the mass media, manipulated to create distorted images of themselves. The stage would be the streets and the message would be a demonstration of disrespect, irreverence and ridicule."
Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore: The Medium is the Massage. Penguin Press. Middlesex 1967.
Rights in Conflict: Report of the Special Task Force of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. Washington D.C. 1 December 1968.

(20) P.F. Lazarsfeld and E. Katz: Personal Influence. Glencoe (Ill.) 1955.

(21) Ibid footnotes 10 and 23.

(22) Resolution 4.36 of the fourteenth session of the General Conference. Unesco, Paris 1966.
Resolution 4.13 of the fifteenth session of the General Conference. Unesco, Paris 1968.

easy one: our massive population stands today at 524 million requiring massive resources and materials; its scatteration in 560,000 separated villages and 3,000 towns makes communication difficult; the low income and education levels of over 80 per cent of this population which is also rural, go along with low motivation for betterment; the wide variety of cultures, habits and traditions have in common in-built resistance to change; and finally, there are the limited channels for mass communication, recent studies showing only 20 per cent of our people, living mainly in the cities, being reached by any of our media. And yet the job can be done as the major campaigns mounted for food production and family planning demonstrate.(23)

Civic education can be a fall-out or feedback in all our programmes, national or State, district or village, governmental or voluntary, public or private. In 1956, Unesco and the All India Radio launched a Radio Farm Forum project in 150 villages in Bombay to which two broadcasts a week were directed every Thursday and Sunday for six weeks. Each broadcast was followed by a one-hour group discussion. The evaluation of the project (despite pointing to certain limits such as the breakdown of radio sets, lack of women participants, Harijans, youth, too many extroverts) sums up much that I have been trying to say.(24)

> Radio Farm Forum has beyond any doubt proved itself a success as a medium for transmitting knowledge. The Forum developed into an institution capable of unifying the village around common decisions and common actions. Where it worked at its best it served both to widen the influence of the Gram Panchayat and to broaden the scope of its action. In some places it took an intermediate position between that of a Panchayat meeting and a town meeting - less binding in its decisions than the former but more flexible in its deliberations than the latter. The hundreds of decisions taken, the wells dug, the pure-bred bulls and leghorns bought, the marketing socieities and balwadis established, all bear witness to this new function of the Forum. But equally so do the changes, great or small, in habits and attitudes that have been brought about, the greater determination, too, to treat certain problems as a common concern of the village and as something that the villagers themselves can help solve through action.
>
> But perhaps even more important is the fact that the Forum as a decision-making body allowed numerous villages to participate in the decision-making process. The present form of organization which calls for a leader and a convener is excellent. If the forums were in future operated with a rotating membership, as many villages suggested, in the course of a few years almost all the villagers with initiative could have the experience of participating in important village decisions. Radio Farm Forum could thus become a most important instrument in developing village leadership and village democracy.

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(23) G. Narain: Mass Communications in Family Planning. Communicator. Vol.III, No.6. New Delhi 1968.

(24) J.C. Mathur and P. Neurath: An Indian Experiment in Farm Radio Forums. Unesco, Paris 1959.

The one other lesson of the forum is that for the average citizen, the issues are not party political but pragmatic, not platform oratory material but concerns of daily living and dying. This calls for open-minded engagement rather than just party loyalties. Adult education through families and schools, community organizations, work associations, youth and women's organizations, music and theatre groups may contribute toward fostering a personality of the citizen who is both independent and tolerant, affirmative and co-operative, action-oriented and reflective. Such citizenship is the foundation stone of any real democracy. Parliamentary democracy has become equated too much with party politics; parties and ideologies have today limited meaning to the individual and in particular to youth. (Witness the reaction of youth the world over to political parties.) It is issues rather than parties which count. Parties count only in so far as they reflect issues. I believe parliamentary democracy can survive only if it succeeds in reflecting the kaleidoscope of popular aspirations without casting them into the frame of party bureaucracies.

Hence, the Indian Adult Education Association, the State associations and all other voluntary bodies associated with you, such as the Andrah Mahila Sabah and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, which are private professional initiatives and not politically oriented, are particularly well suited to steer civic participation into issue-oriented discussion and action. This will, in the long run, both transform and strengthen the roots and fruits of parliamentary democracy in this land. In turn, the practice of parliamentary democracy will then become a major component of and contributor to adult education.

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